

For the past eight years, I have enjoyed working as a teacher and scholar of French and Francophone language and culture. I have independently taught a broad range of language, culture, and literature courses, from business for majors and translation for non-French speaking graduate students to all levels of basic language and French culture. In addition to promoting knowledge and appreciation of French language and culture, my goals aspire to give students the tools for success at the college level and beyond, which include not only building competence in practical, marketable skills, but also enthusiasm and lifelong desire to learn. I seek to help students discover a modern, multicultural Francophone world and enhance their understanding of our increasingly interconnected and interdependent societies. I deeply enjoy interactions with students of all backgrounds and use the diversity of these experiences to enliven and enrich my own teaching.

The theoretical framework for my teaching lies in the socio-cultural approach of a communicative classroom. Through this student-centered approach, I emphasize a classroom that stimulates intellectual curiosity through the establishment of meaningful and practical communication between learners and new cultures. Second language acquisition permits the expansion of learners' communicative worlds, and as an educator, my role is to strategically guide learners towards independence and the awareness of their own skills. My classroom includes a rich variety of learning environments and participation structures in order to accommodate diverse learner styles; underpinning my philosophy is the understanding that the most successful activities are those that are both meaningful to the learner and purposeful in their interaction with others. Within a positive and relaxed environment and among a supportive community of fellow learners, my classroom structure actively encourage students' critical thinking skills, challenging them to make connections and comparisons between their previously held understandings of the world and the new perspectives provided by language and cultural studies. To this end, my classroom employs a wide variety of authentic materials (current events, literature, art, music, scholarly works, and other documents) which are tailored to students' learning styles, language levels, and personal interests.

Because of the disparate backgrounds and goals of students in French programs, I try to personally get to know students in order to find their interests, thus in the end evolving a course around the real needs of the students. I use student feedback and evaluations to actively inform both the content of my teaching as well as my techniques. I strive to have a varied curriculum, both in content and format, and use activities as projects and presentations to allow students to pursue their own interests and then share that newfound knowledge with their peers. In every language class session, I strive to use the limited time we have in class to maximize speaking and listening skills through pair and small groups activities, while authentic, culturally relevant readings are ideal for out of class assignments. I invite students to utilize my office hours to individually work on their writing skills with me, while at the same time teaching them proofreading skills; to this end, I highly encourage peer review both inside and outside of the

classroom. Multimedia is an excellent asset for learning, and I often begin class sessions with a video clip, web reading, or music, thus setting a positive, inquisitive tone for the hour to follow.

I have experience with both online and traditional textbook learning, and I have found that there is indeed a place for both technology and the traditional classroom. Technology is one of the means by which a classroom can include a variety of communicative activities that not only address the four basic skills of language learning, but also activities that are expressive and transactional. Course management systems, such as Angel, Blackboard, and Icon, allow great flexibility, helping me to efficiently share up to date information with students, customize learning, and continue discussions outside of the classroom. Online learning tools are thus complementary rather than antithetical. In addition to being an excellent organizational tool, technology enables students to have direct contact with culture, and maximizes the opportunity to personalize language and pursue their individual interests. While teaching the fourth semester French, for example, I structured the course around a virtual journey through four regions of the Francophone world; in addition to formal language instruction in the classroom, students learned about civilization and culture through films, music, and authentic readings.

My standards are high for students, including professionalism, organization, and timeliness, while at the same time modeling these assets through my own teaching and scholarship. I strive to cultivate accessibility and dialogue, through one-on-one relationships with students during office hours, small group activities within the classroom, as well as by setting clear course expectations and requirements. I endeavor to model my teaching upon what I wish my students to become; in addition to the content of any particular class, I emphasize organizational and other skills that crossover to other courses, as well as to their future careers, in general. For example in literature, culture, and business courses, I highlight the importance of good writing skills and teach students how to research (including defining the all-important scholarly article), write a bibliography, and use MLA format. In Business French, for example, I emphasize practical skills in addition to vocabulary building and topics of current interest, such as in business writing and correspondence, job seeking strategies, and professional conversation techniques.

As a teacher and life-long student of languages, I have found language program experiences to be particularly rich and rewarding; for some students, the courses represent the beginning of a lifetime experience with a second language and for others, their brief general education courses are one of their only opportunities to engage the world from the new perspective that language studies provide. Although vocabulary and grammatical structures risk fading from their memory with time, the cultural knowledge and new perspective of their position in a multicultural world brought by the experience in the foreign language classroom will remain with them throughout their journeys in life.